

CIVIL WAR

April 3, 1940

Nelle Y. McLaughlin
Marlinton, W. Va.POCAHONTAS COUNTY

-1-

Chapter 4--Section 4--Part bReminiscences of Civil War Days.
By Evelyn Yeager Beard.

In the fall and winter of 1861-62 the Confederate soldiers camped at Camp Allegheny, my old home place, under the command of Jose (Ed) Johnson. The sugar grove belonging to my father, John Yeager, consisting of about five hundred trees was used for building the camps and cabins. This location could be used as a point of vantage, as by using field glasses they could observe the movements of the Union soldiers camped on top of Cheat Mountain, near the Clubhouse.

The year of 1861-62 was a cold and rainy year. Many of the soldiers camping there were from the South. I remember them as being not very warmly clad, and shivering with cold. Not being used to the cold, damp climate many of them sickened and died, and were buried on a little hill back of our house.

Our back porch was partitioned off to be used as a commissary by Uncle Jake Arbogast. The soldiers wanting tobacco, candy, etc., would have to wait their turn. The room being small, and at times crowded, they would ask me to make their purchases for them. Being a child and small, they would make room for me. I would make their purchases and then receive a liberal share of the candy. I was a youngster of about ten and my brother, Mack Yeager (Paul McNeel Yeager) eight. The officers and soldiers made a lot over us children. Receiving boxes from home they would invite us down to help eat them. Of course we were not particularly shy in doing so. Many of

POCAHONTAS COUNTY

-2-

the cakes were decorated so fancy that as children we thought there was nothing in the world like them. Colonel McCune would often let me wear the big plume he wore in his hat, and it was a gala day for me when I would have the privilege of wearing it. When leaving Camp Allegheny, he gave me the plume, taking it from his hat, saying I could keep it for always.

One of the skirmishes of the Civil War was fought at this point, called Church Hill, ~~of~~ Camp Allegheny. While but a skirmish, it was a hard fought one and lasted from about 4 A.M. until after 2 P.M. If I remember correctly, nineteen were killed. I remember the shots falling on the roof of our house like hail. My mother and sister Fannie were ill at this time. During a lull in the battle Colonel Baldwin of the 52nd Virginia Regiment had them carried over on cots to his own cabin for safety, and they remained there during the night. My brother Mack Yeager and myself watched the remainder of the battle from a point of safety. We saw the Confederate flagman fall, and saw the flag almost instantly raised again, believe by Lieut. Rigor, but I am not positive about the name. Capt. Mollohan was killed in the battle of Church Hill, and was buried there along with many others. A spent ball passed between my brother the late Henry Yeager, and Rachel Arbogast, who was visiting us. Capt. Anderson, Confederate was killed by advanced guard of Union soldiers dressed in Confederate uniform. Capt. Anderson waved to them, thinking they were Confederate men and he was instantly killed.

After the battle was over there were several wounded men to be taken care of. The cabins were unsuitable, and my mother

POCAHONTAS COUNTY

-3-

had the upstairs of our house converted into a temporary hospital. Our house was under construction when war broke out, and was not then complete. The upstairs was one large room. Several of the wounded men died, and were buried along by those killed in battle. For a brief period a downstairs room was occupied by a sick officer, with his wife and baby. Later this same room was used as a Post Office kept by Uncle Jake Arbogast. The front part of this house is still in good condition, the remainder being torn down. We had quite a collection of sabers, cannon balls, musket balls and minnie balls which we used in our play. Ed Freeman, living at the present time at the old home place at Allegheny church, finds some of the musket balls occasionally when plowing his fields. He gave some of them to us when we had a family reunion picnic there in the summer of 1924. The old batteries and trenches are still in evidence.

A Confederate soldier was sick in one of the camps of the 31st Virginia Regiment when a Union soldier crept into the cabin to steal provisions, thinking the cabin was empty. The sick soldier crawled to the door after him and shot him.

My father, John Yeager, died December 2, 1861, and was believed to have been poisoned.

In the spring of 1862 the Confederates broke camp on Top Allegheny. At two o'clock the same night of their leaving John Sleten and two or three other men set fire to the commissary cabins and camps by igniting every other cabin. My mother pleaded with them to save them so as to be used for stables and out-

POCAHONTAS COUNTY

-4-

buildings, but they told her she should be thankful they were not burning the house. The 52nd and 31st Virginia Regiment camps were completely destroyed, but a few of the other cabins were saved.

When the Confederates broke camp in the spring 1862, my brothers, Will and Henry Yeager, Crawford Arbogast and others went with them, Will and Henry joining Company G. 31st Virginia Regiment, Earle's Division, Ewell's Corps. Will was killed Feb. 6, 1865 at Hatcher's Run near Petersburg, Virginia, and was buried there. Henry Yeager and W. H. Hull were captured and made prisoners at Fort Steadman near Petersburg on March 25, 1865, and taken to Point Lookout, Maryland. They were released alphabetically, W. H. Hull the early part of July, and Henry sometime later.

After so many of our own boys had joined the army, mail became an important item in the lives of those at home. All of our mail, as well as that of the neighbors, had to be gotten from Hightown, Virginia, eleven miles away, only one house being located along the way. The person making the trip would bring mail for all in the neighborhood. Practically every family had someone that belonged to them in the war. The boys, before leaving, decided that when any of them wrote a letter, they would mention the ones they knew and had seen, so each family would hear as often as possible. Mail in those days was not a daily occurrence as it is now, and receiving word, however indirectly, would be a comfort to the ones at home. When our turn came for getting the mail, I was usually the one that rode horse-